



Religious Liberty Awakened: The Black Robed Regiment of Today

By Karen Lees

Historian [David Barton writes](#), “The Black Robed Regiment was the name the British placed on the courageous and patriotic clergy of the American Revolution, referencing the black robes that ministers wore in that day. Those pastors boldly proclaimed the Word of God in everything that applied to life, whether spiritual or temporal, whether related to eternal life...or to topics such as taxation, education, government, military, or any other issue touched in the Bible. America is longing for a [resurgence of the Black Robed Regiment](#) – they want ministers who will provide much needed community leadership and speak out fearlessly on issues related to today's culture.”

Pollster George Barna from the American Cultural & Faith Institute presented [his research](#), in which more than 90% of active church-goers desire to hear more about the concerns of society in church. Among the top issues people want addressed, are abortion and the right to life, religious persecution and liberty, poverty and the church's responsibility, cultural restoration and morals, sexual identity and marriage, and America's divine foundations and the role of Christians and the church in society.

Because of the deep hunger of the people to hear biblical truth as it applies to today's relevant issues, the spirit of the Black Robes of early America is rekindled. That same spirit has come alive in some pastors in Tennessee as they work diligently to fill the great need.

On September 17th at Legislative Plaza, before the state capitol in Nashville, more than a thousand citizens, many arriving on church buses with their pastors, attended the “Stand in the Gap for Truth” rally sponsored by the [Tennessee Pastors Network](#) (TNPN). TNPN is part of the [American Pastors Network](#).

The goal of the rally was to motivate citizens in Tennessee to defend their religious freedom, uphold the design for the nation as defined in America's original founding documents, as well as engage Tennesseans to address the most relevant and talked-about issues of the day.

[TNPN's President, Pastor Dale Walker](#), also a businessman and student of self governance, along with Tennessee Representative Judd Matheny (R-Tulahoma), were among the organizers of the event.

Walker leads the group of biblically faithful Tennessee pastors and church liaisons in building a permanent infrastructure of like-minded clergy who affirm the authority of biblical truth. These pastors take seriously the mandate to be “salt and light” to the culture, as they encourage informed Christian thinking about contemporary social issues. At least one Sunday each month, public policy issues are examined in light of scripture. Pastors then encourage their congregations to take responsibility for their role as free citizens by actively participating in America's founding self governance principles. All without politicizing the pulpit.

More than 40 state lawmakers showed support with their attendance at the rally, including Senator Mae Beavers (R-Mt. Juliet), and Representative Mark Pody (R-Lebanon), sponsors of the Tennessee Natural Marriage Defense Act. The lawmakers filed the bill on the same day the announcement was made from the podium at the Pastor's rally.

In 2006, Tennessee citizens voted in overwhelming support of the Tennessee Marriage Protection Amendment, making it a permanent part of the Tennessee Constitution. The new bill seeks to protect Tennessee's constitutional amendment from unlawful federal encroachment, defining marriage in Tennessee as "between one man and one woman".

As introduced, the marriage bill states, "Natural marriage between one (1) man and one (1) woman as recognized by the people of Tennessee remains the law in Tennessee, regardless of any court decision to the contrary. Any court decision purporting to strike down natural marriage, including (a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision), is unauthoritative, void, and of no effect."

TNPN President Dale Walker responded, "We applaud these lawmakers who stand...for the state constitution and for the wishes of Tennessee voters. A rogue court this summer, through the opinions of five justices, violated state constitutions around the country, and now we must work to recapture state sovereignty."

Walker continued, "At the 'Stand in the Gap for Truth' rally, we asked pastors around the state to give of their first fruits and speak from the pulpit on the first Sunday of each month about the issues that are affecting all Americans, such as marriage, the sanctity of life, and religious freedom."

TNPN Vice President, [Pastor Benjamin Graham](#) added, "We have already seen how the Supreme Court decision, which essentially blanked state constitutions, has stripped faithful Americans of their religious liberties. [Referring to jailed KY County Court Clerk, Kim Davis] And now, Tennessee's pastors and churches must stand together with our lawmakers to bring about change."

Other notable guest speakers at the "Stand in the Gap for Truth" rally included [Rafael Cruz](#), father of Senator Ted Cruz; [Bishop E.W. Jackson](#), Harvard Law School graduate and Pastor of Boston's Ebenezer Baptist Church, and Joe Davis, husband of Kentucky County Court Clerk, Kim Davis. The event was covered by the Associated Press, [The Christian Post](#), [The Tennessean](#), local television, radio, and news outlets, and shared by the New York Times.

The pastor's rally received an enthusiastic response from all Tennesseans in attendance - many of which have never been engaged in issues or policies in the past. When asked for a show of hands, more than half the crowd indicated they had never visited the Tennessee state capitol before that day.

Concerned citizens have been awakened, and are now becoming more active and informed, thanks to pastors who understand the divinely bestowed responsibility of informing their congregations about the relevant issues that affect the daily lives of those under their care.

These pastors are following the example of the Black Robes of early America as they follow the biblical mandate to be "salt and light" in their culture. For those who have spent hours on their knees in their private "war rooms", this awakening is an answer to prayer.

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